

Saga™

BRIAN K. VAUGHAN FIONA STAPLES

CHAPTER
TWENTY
FOUR



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FOUR

SAGA

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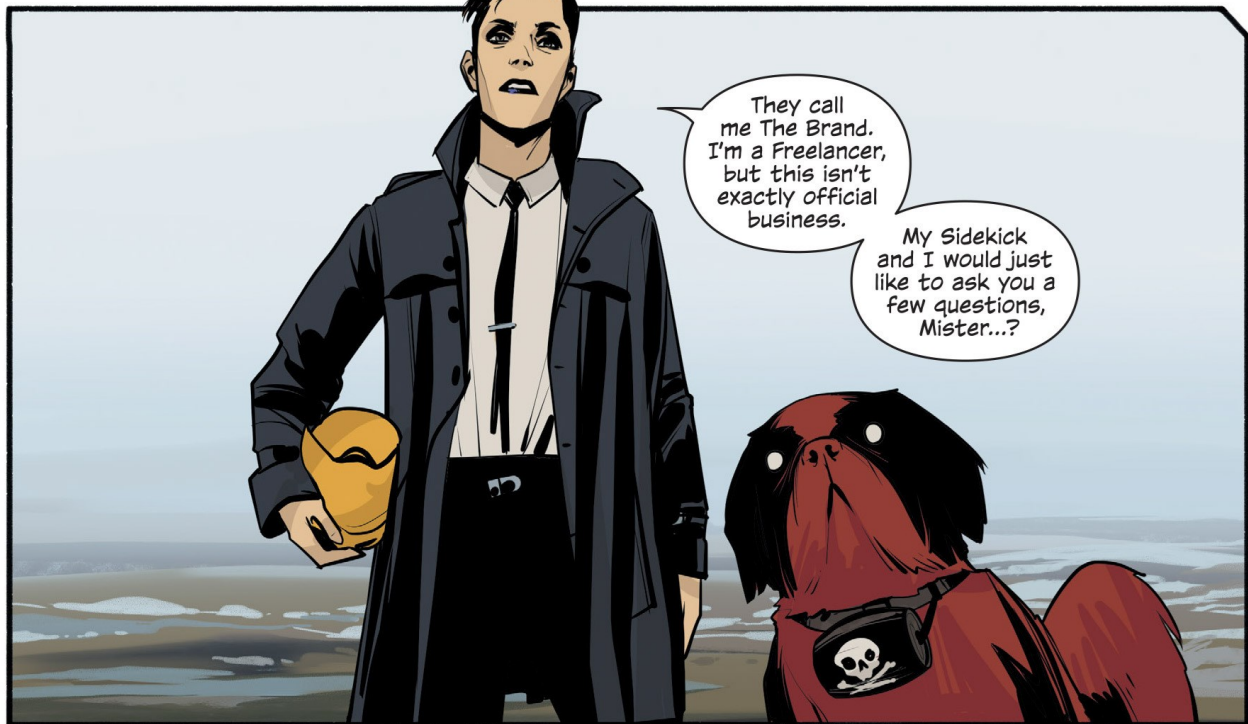
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Are
you lady
folk?





They call me The Brand. I'm a Freelancer, but this isn't exactly official business.

My Sidekick and I would just like to ask you a few questions, Mister...?



Ghüs.

Goose?

Nope, Ghüs.

I thought that's what I just...

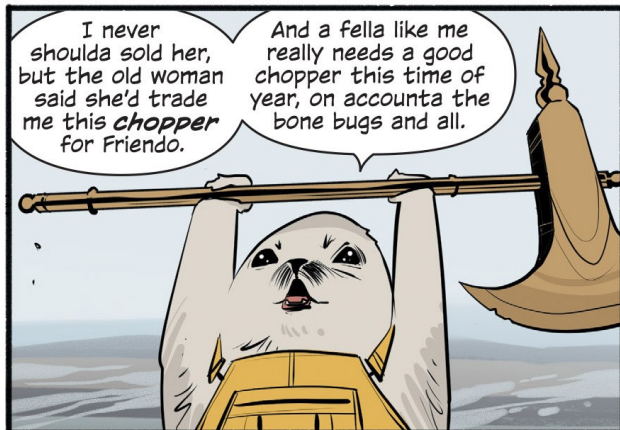
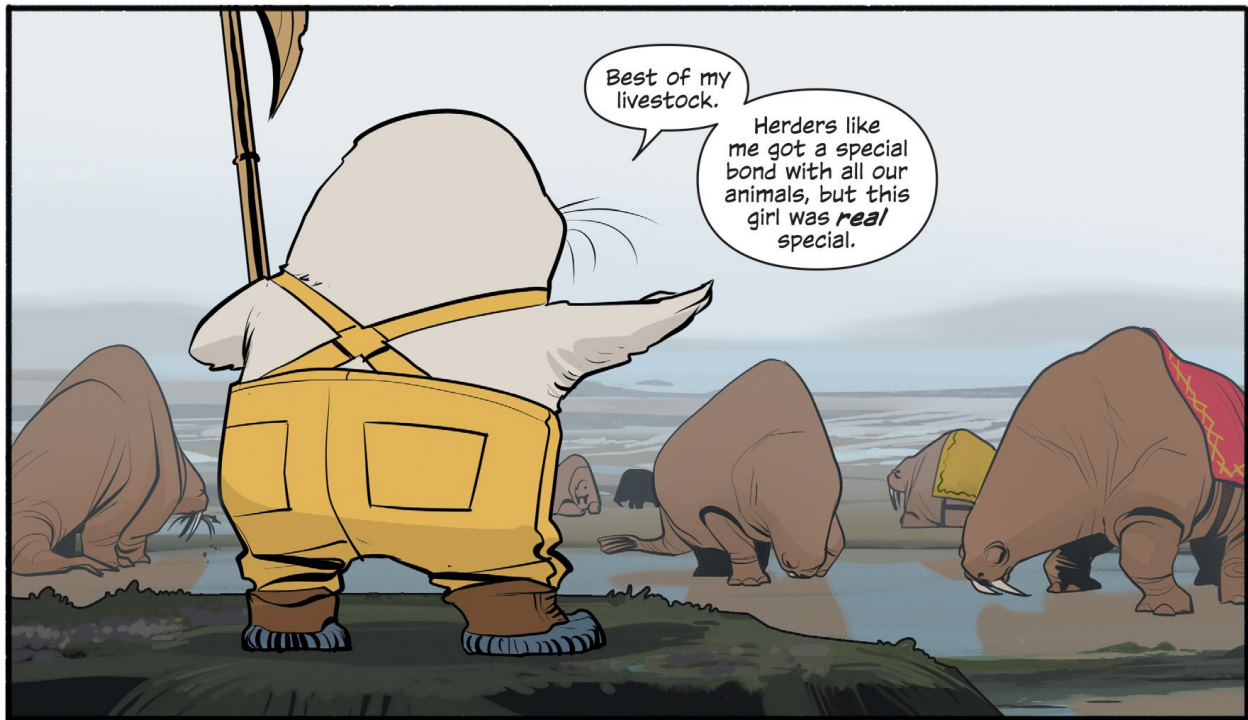
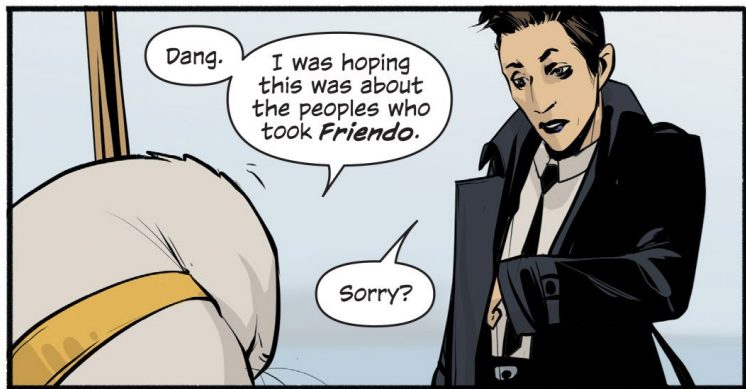


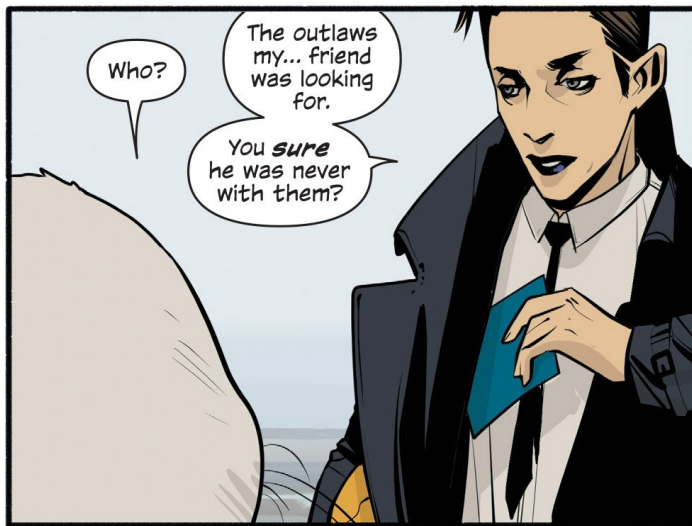
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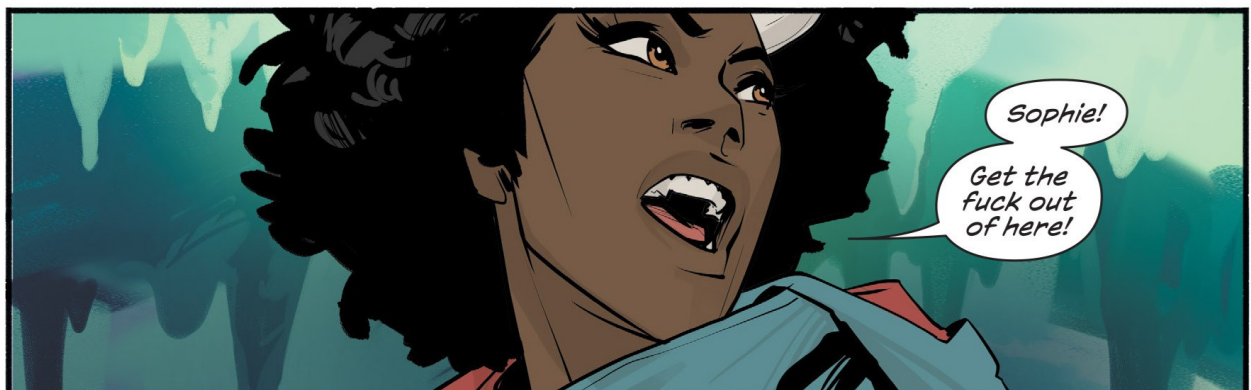
Sweet Boy and I are trying to find out who hurt a colleague of ours.



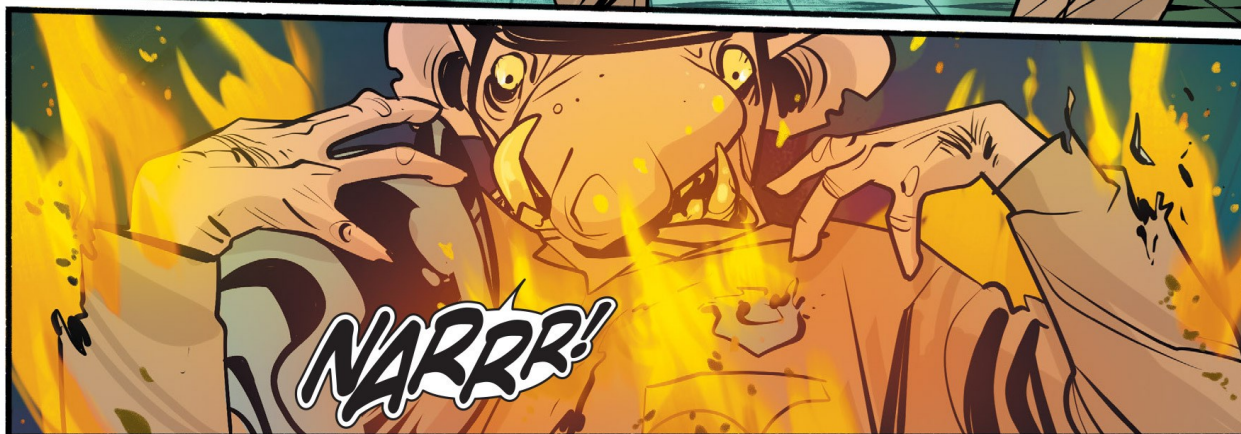
He has less up top these days, but this is the most recent pic I could find.







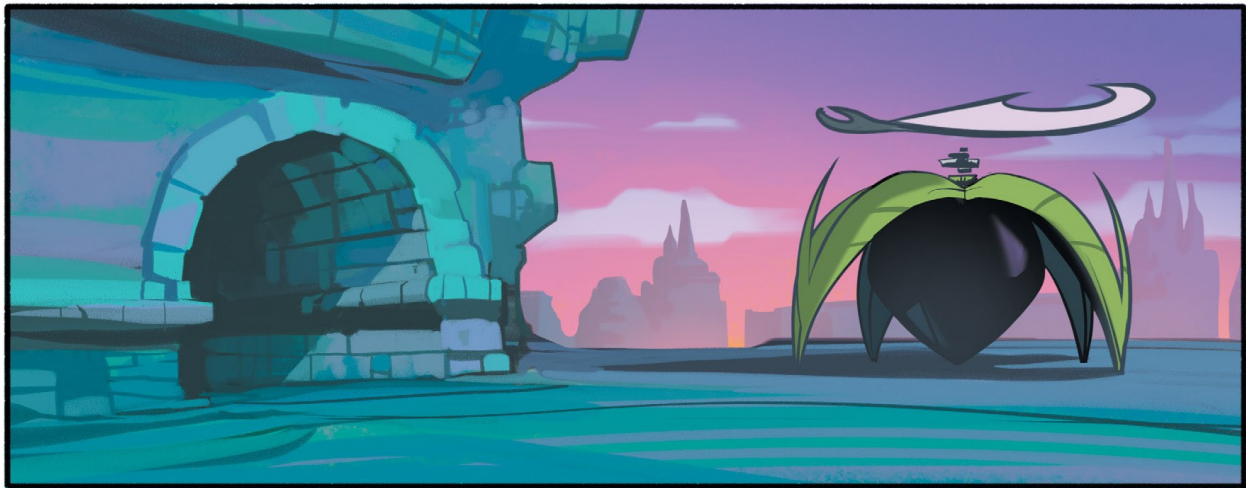






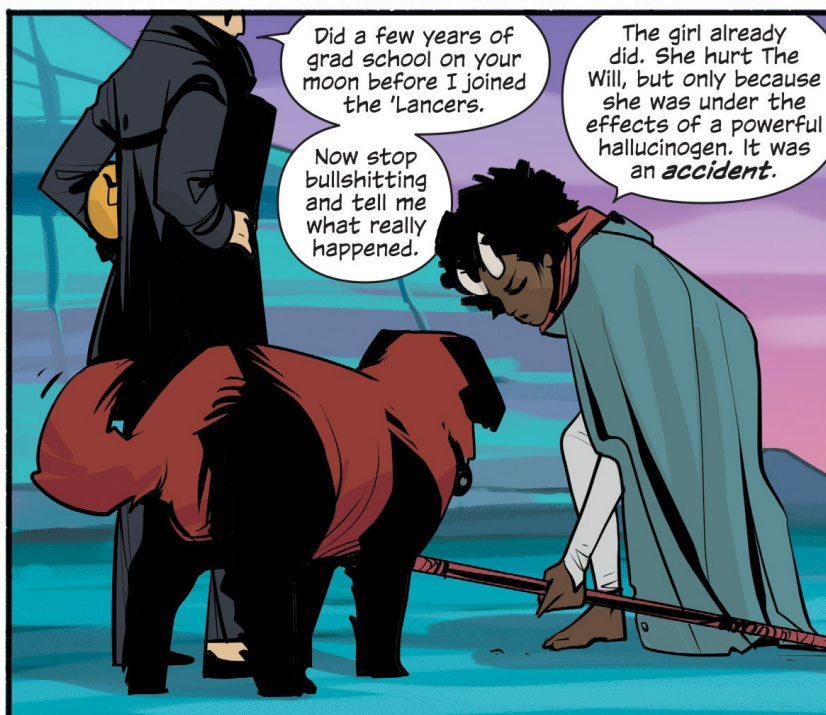


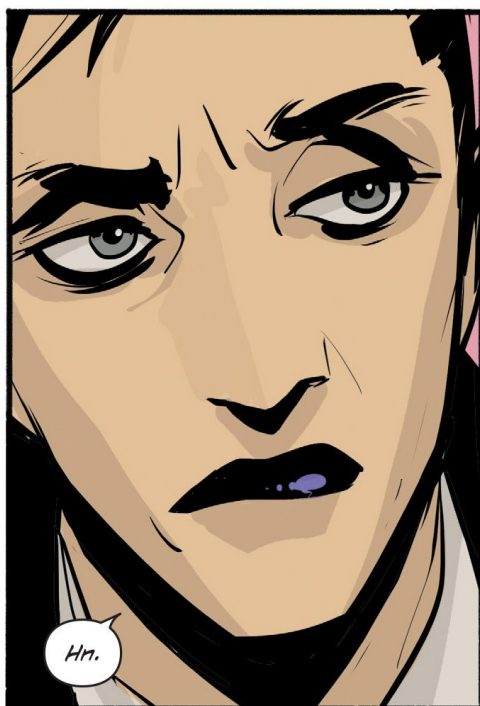
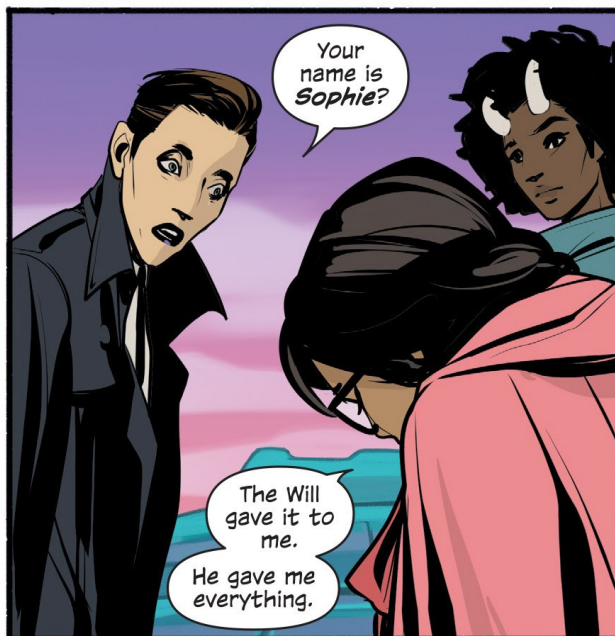
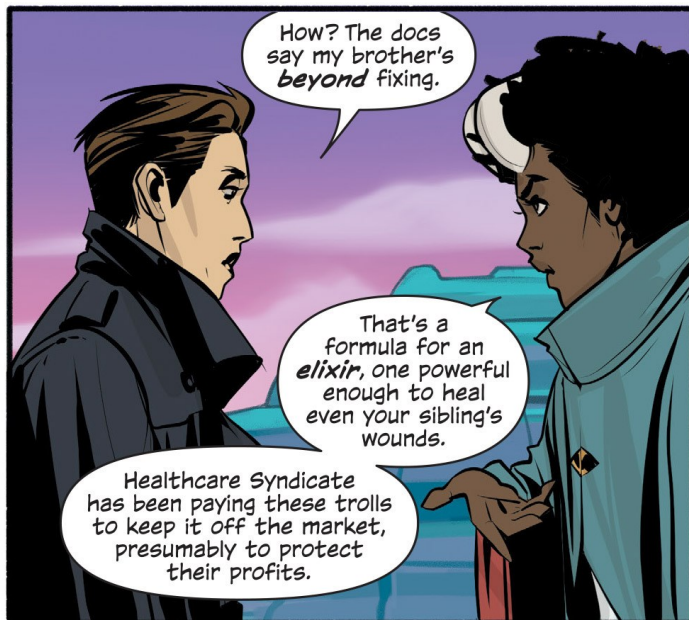




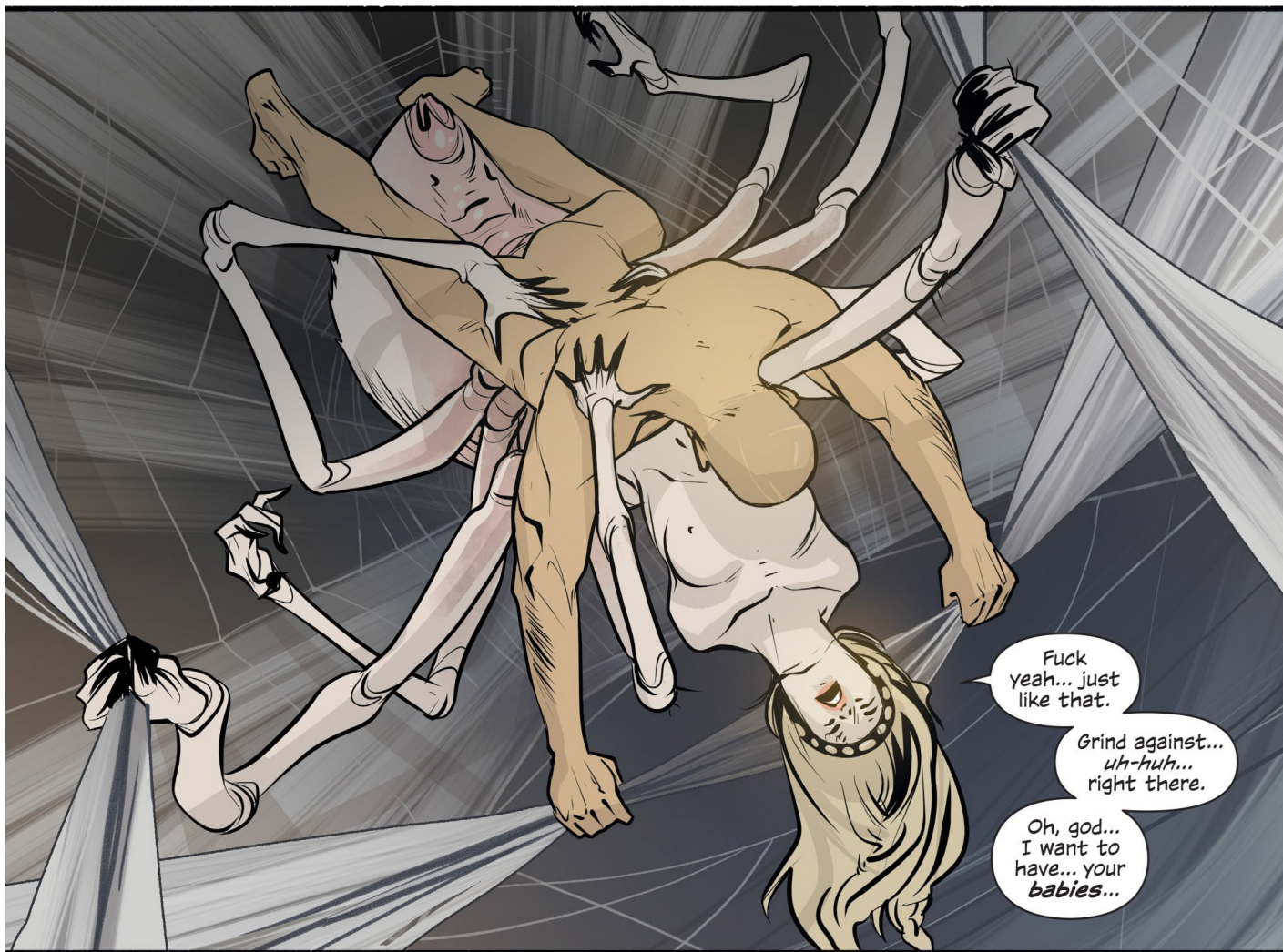


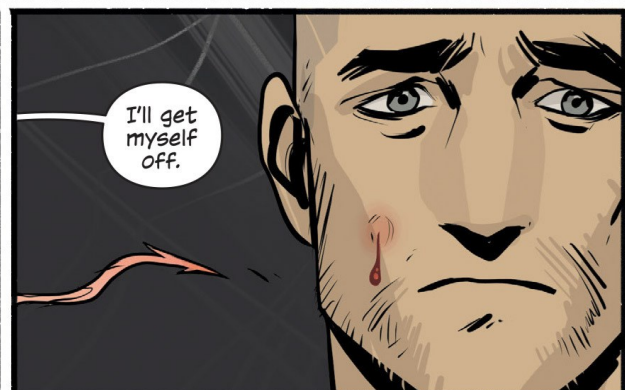
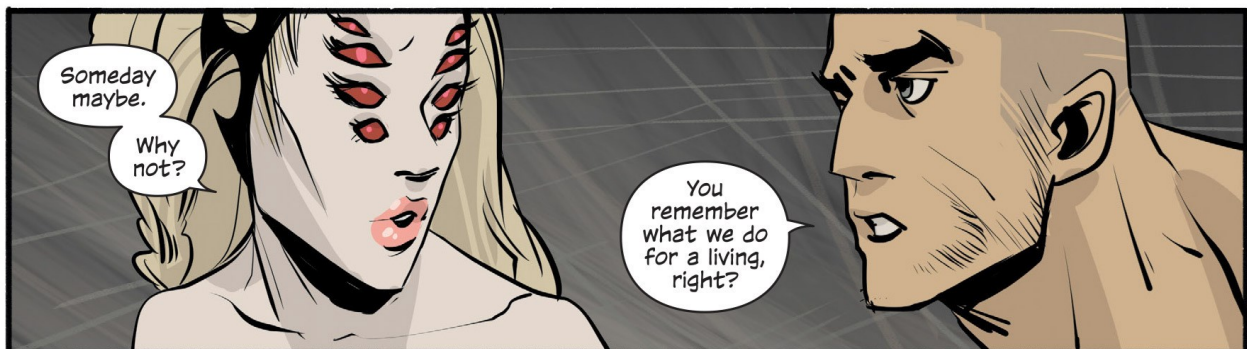
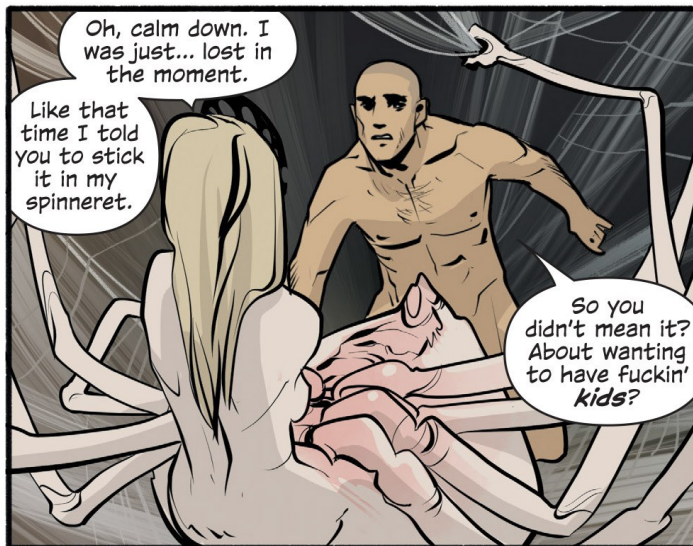


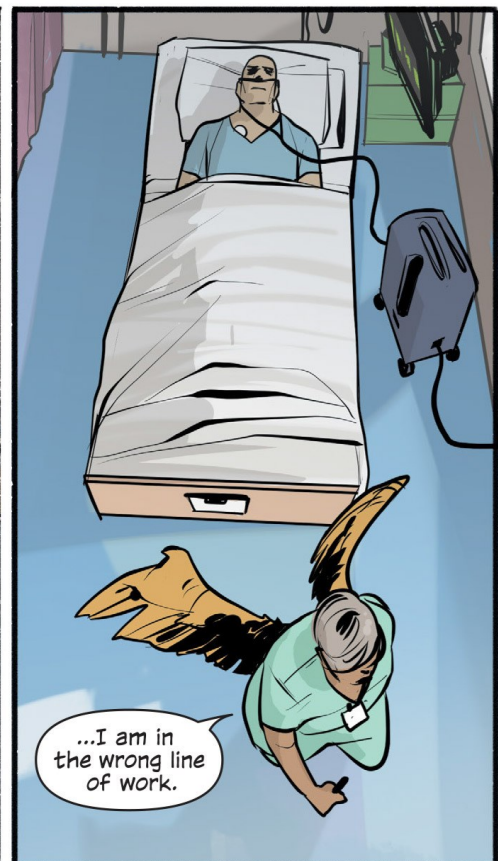
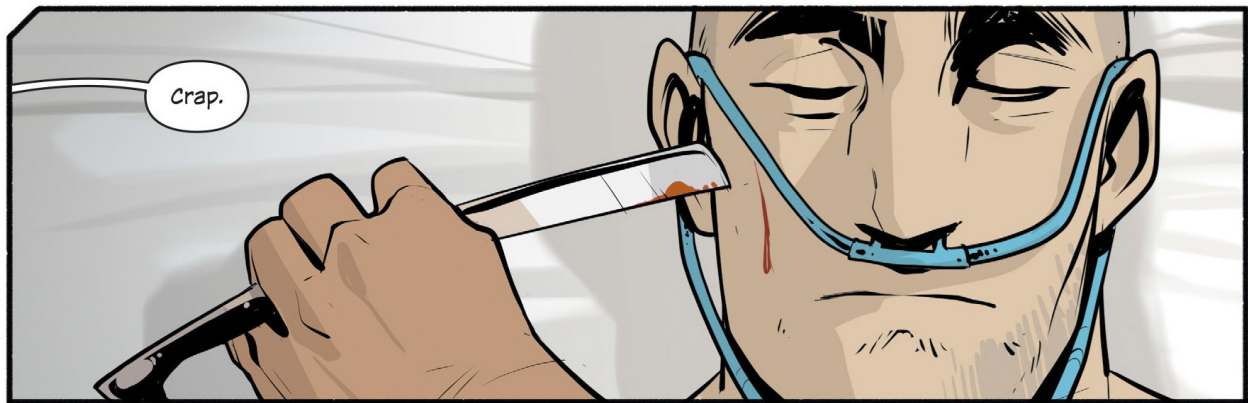




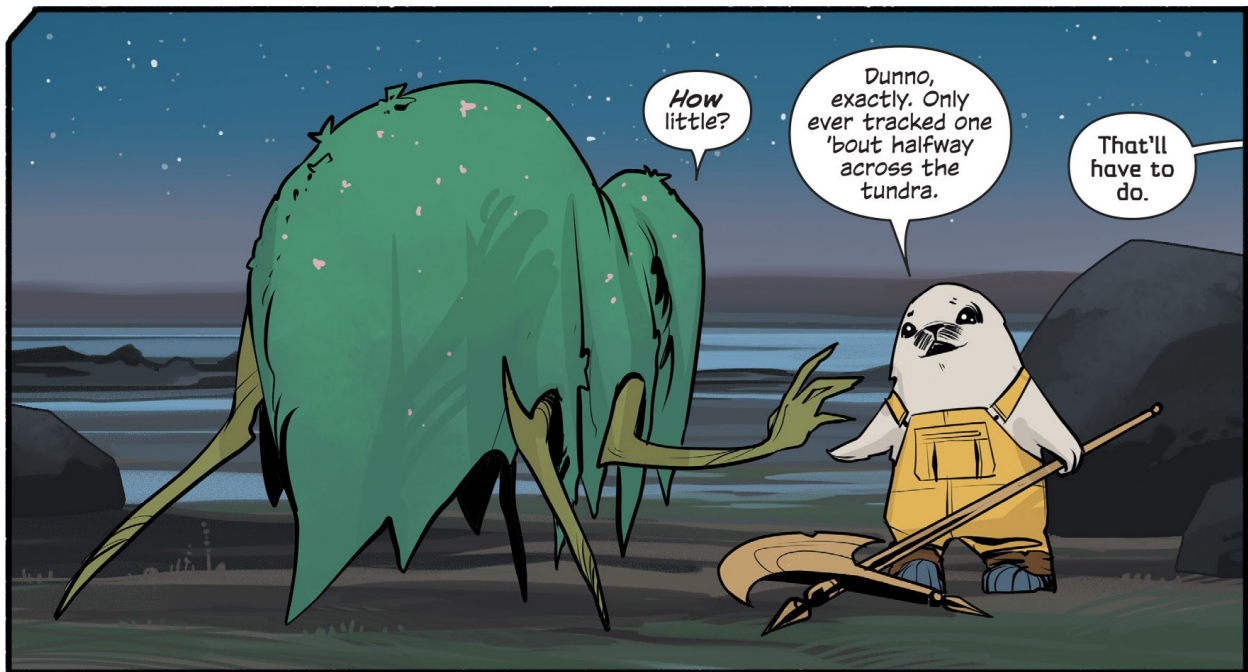












Sir, we
need your help
finding our
families.



TO BE CONTINUED

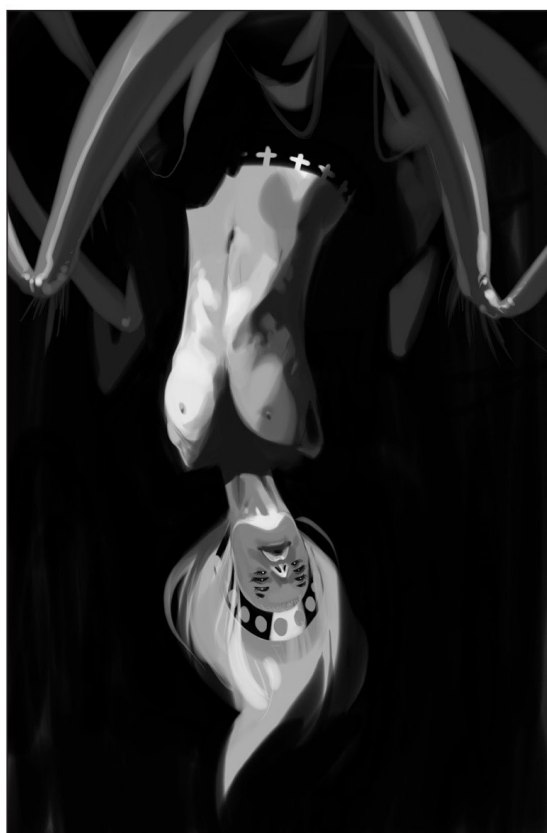
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That's not too cruel a place to leave everybody, is it?

Sorry, friends, it's once again time for another of our Dreaded Hiatuses, but as always, just because our book's publishing schedule is taking a short break doesn't mean that WE are. The whole creative team is already slaving away on the variant-free Chapter Twenty-five (25?!), and these few brief skip months will allow us to bank enough pages to put out another six issues of slambang adult-entertainment in a timely fashion, with zero fill-ins, upon our triumphant return in early 2015.

But fear not, to help stave off your depression, we've put together an all-new edition of our reluctantly tolerated **SAGA HIATUS SURVIVAL GUIDE**, which should help occupy your idle hands during our cruel winter apart:

1. BUY MORE SAGA How would you like to feast your eye-holes on some never-before-seen artwork of The Stalk by this year's Eisner/Harvey/Shuster Award-winning Best Artist Fiona Staples, he asks rhetorically?



That's just a small taste of one of the dozens of pages of all-new bonus material that you'll only be able to see exclusively in the back of **SAGA BOOK ONE**, a new hardcover collection of our first eighteen (18!) issues, on stands in just a few weeks.

We've been working on this beast for months, and it's

the most proud I've ever been of any collected edition of something I've written. Fiona approved everything from the amount of gloss on the cover to the paper stock, and Fonografiks has paid special attention to absolutely every detail of this 500-plus-page hardcover, down to the color of its tailbands (something I didn't even know existed until we started putting this thing together).

All this will cost you less than fifty bucks, so we hope you'll please consider maybe buying a copy for that one cool person in your life who doesn't yet know that he or she loves comics.

And then in December, it's **SAGA VOLUME FOUR**, the crazily affordable new softcover collection of the arc that ends with the very issue you're holding in your hot hands. How's that for fast service, trade-waiters who probably aren't reading these words right now?

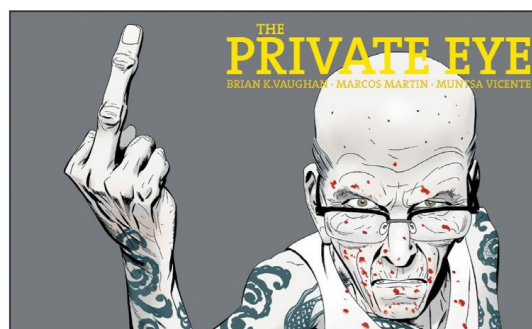
2. SAY HELLO TO FIONA STAPLES ON YOUR COMPUTER

You're already following @FionaStaples on Twitter, Tumblr and Facebook, yes? Why not write her today and tell her how fucking badass she is? Even better, head over to *EssentialSequential.com*, where you'll be able to find copies of her spectacular art book, **FIONA STAPLES: DIGEST**, as well as glorious limited-edition prints that should be hanging on your wall right now.

3. SAY HELLO TO BKV IN PERSON As Fiona retreats to her art cave for a little hard-earned hibernation, I'll be busting out of my writer cocoon to do a shit-ton of appearances.

First up, I'm stopping by the legendary **COMIX EXPERIENCE** in San Francisco on Saturday, November 22 to scribble on copies of our new hardcover (and whatever else of yours I have time to sign). Really excited for this one.

Then, on December 5-7, I'll be at **COMIC-CON PORTUGAL** with PanelSyndicate.com cofounder Marcos Martin in support of **THE PRIVATE EYE**, our pay-what-you-want, web-exclusive mystery series about a totally implausible future where the digital Cloud bursts and rains down all our darkest secrets for the entire world to see. Bring your iPads so we can somehow sign your download of Issue #8:



But my world tour/hiding from parental responsibilities doesn't end there! I'll then be headed to New York City to sign at the very cool KINOKUNIYA BOOKSTORE in Midtown Manhattan on Wednesday, December 17, and with my old friends at the Downtown location of MIDTOWN COMICS the very next day, Thursday, December 18. Check your local listings for exact times (and if you come say hey, please be sure to discretely pass me some Fadeaway, or at least your planet's closest equivalent).

Finally, I'm actually planning to return to San Francisco in January for a top-secret event and perhaps even a Very Big Announcement, and I also hope to swing by the ISOTOPE while I'm there, so keep refreshing the internet until it inevitably provides you with less vague details.

4. BUY OTHER COMICS BY TEAM SAGA Did you already grab that rad *Aliens* cover that Staples did for Dark Horse? How about her covers for *Life With Archie*, *Conan The Avenger* and especially *Thor*? If not, please correct your monstrous oversight immediately.

And in December, our esteemed coordinator/publisher Eric Stephenson (of Eisner-nominated *NOWHERE MEN* fame) releases the first issue of his excellent-looking new series *THEY'RE NOT LIKE US*, with art by the great Simon Gane and the increasingly legendary Jordie Bellaire.

That book will be lettered by none other than our own Fonografiks, who's also been doing some outstanding work for the Warren Ellis/Jason Howard Image series *TREES*, which you should most definitely already be reading.

I was way too busy blowing up my Hollywood career to make any new series this past year, but if you've never read *PRIDE OF BAGHDAD*, the graphic novel I created with art giant Niko Henrichon, DC/Vertigo is releasing a pretty amazing Deluxe Edition in December with lots of fascinating new behind-the-scenes material. More than anything else I've ever written, I think that book might appeal to readers who like *SAGA*, so many thanks to any of you who decide to give it a read.

5. RE-WATCH THE SECRET OF NIMH That's a pretty god-damn excellent movie, huh? What was your favorite scene? Isn't Nicodemus a cool name? Do you think an animated film like that could be made today? Hold on, what do you mean you've never seen it before? Because it's super-old like I am? Well, screw you, you big turkey, you're missing out. You should stream it for yourself tonight, and then...

6. WRITE US A LETTER ABOUT IT Or anything, really. Your Reader Surveys are still pouring in from last issue, but the *To Be Continued* mailbox (the physical address is at the top of this and every letter column) always gets way too quiet during our Vacationanza, so won't you please stop punishing us and kindly drop us a line? We can't look at your story ideas or unpublished fiction, and we unfortunately don't have the wherewithal to sign or return anything, but absolutely everything else is fair game, especially original artwork, motorcycle-purchasing advice, and questions about graduate school.

And speaking of letters, let's tackle just a couple of your recent missives before we get to the real stars of this lettercol, Hamburger K. Vaughan's official selections for this year's

SAGA COSTUME CONTEST.

Dear Brian and Fiona,

I would like to apologize in advance for the salty language, but I don't know a better way to put it... I fucking love *Saga*.

Once I saw the gorgeous cover art of issue #1, I was *HOOKED*. I came to the series a few months late, but hunted down the back issues and devoured the first six in a single sitting. I was completely in love with the gloriously compelling, subversive and heartbreaking goodness this series has to offer. The characters, storytelling, and especially the artwork all meld together and really create an amazing experience, far above anything the average indie or mainstream comic book could hope to achieve.

The cover issue of #1 is one of my all-time favorite pieces of art, hands down. It is a rich, vibrantly colored piece which tells so much of the story, and the closer you look, the more it draws you in and socks you in the gut with its expressiveness and emotional weight. So I knew I needed to get a full color half-sleeve of it on my arm (see photos).

There was only one tattoo artist I could trust with something this detailed and expressive, Matt Nunnelee at One Shot Studios in Edgewater, MD. Unfortunately I had to flip the positioning of the characters in order to fit in Alana's wings just right, but I'm amazed with the final ink, it's just plain sick. It was completed in three sittings over a little more than eleven hours total. I get a lot of breastfeeding jokes from people who don't know what it is, but that's a small price to pay for the sheer awesomeness of having Fiona's art permanently attached.

Thanks so much for creating such a memorable experience, not just the compelling story, but also the amazing art that consistently keeps wowing, amusing, and speaking to me (and not in a mental illness sort of way, mind you). Keep it coming, and I'll keep buying stacks of trades to give to everyone I know!

You guys rock!

Chris D.

Cockeysville, MD



Thanks for sharing your sweet breastfeeding ink with us, Chris, and for crediting the tattoo artist responsible. If anyone else out there has *Saga* tats to share, please send us a pic and let

us know who scarred you for life (in the best way possible).

Hi Brian,

Someone just pointed out to me that you mentioned my comic (Thoughts From Iceland) in the letters section of Saga #19 (you called it "terrific"!), and for that I would like to say a HUGE THANK YOU!! It means SO much to hear. I am a big fan, but I get the collected volumes of Saga, so I hadn't seen your response!

Two quick questions if it's okay: first, I'm wondering if you can recall how you found my humble little comic? And second, I plan on collecting all three mini volumes into one book (probably with a Kickstarter) early next year—and I'd love to get your permission to use your mention as a blurb. Let me know if that's okay.

Thanks again!

Lonnie Mann

New York, NY

www.lonniecomics.com

Sure, Lonnie! Unlike D. Oswald Heist, I never mind blurbing work I like. Your cover for the first *Thoughts from Iceland* caught my eye as I was browsing Comixology, and I ended up really enjoying all three installments. Like any great travelogue, it made me feel as if I actually visited a place I've never been to, one I now want to "return" to soon. Fantastic colors, too.

Dear Brian and Fiona,

Thank you, thank you. I'm sixty-five and have been a discriminating comic collector since the early seventies, when I saw the evolving potential of the graphic story medium to be a new kind of literature, for adults. (I was an English major, undergrad.) My high hopes continue to be validated, and I've been a major fan of Saga since the first issue. I had already enjoyed and admired earlier work by each of you, and your collaboration has been a joy to behold. Fiona's art blows me away issue after issue, and your combined imaginations have produced something unique and delightful. The title suggests that this is going to be a looong story. I hope that proves to be the case. I'm on board for the duration.

The love scene with Alana and Marko in issue #21 moved me, and reminded me of one of my favorite passages of poetry by Archibald Macleish, from his long poem, "The Happy Marriage:"

They say they are one flesh:
They are two nations.
They cannot mix nor mesh:
Their conjugations
Are cries from star to star.

This jewel about marital intimacy comes to you from a guy who's about to celebrate twenty-five years married to his sweetheart and best friend, and a sucker for well-told stories of True Love. Keep on keepin' on!

Jeff Koob

Professional Organization of English Majors
Columbia, SC

Man, what a great letter. Congrats on your twenty-fifth anniversary, Jeff.

But enough epic poetry! It's time for fancy dress-up. I really wish we had room to show off the many, MANY astounding entries for this year's contest (especially a bunch of particularly sharp gender-swapped submissions), but for now, here are Hamburger's finalists (each of whom will be receiving some very special SAGA swag), building up to our one and only FIRST PLACE WINNER.



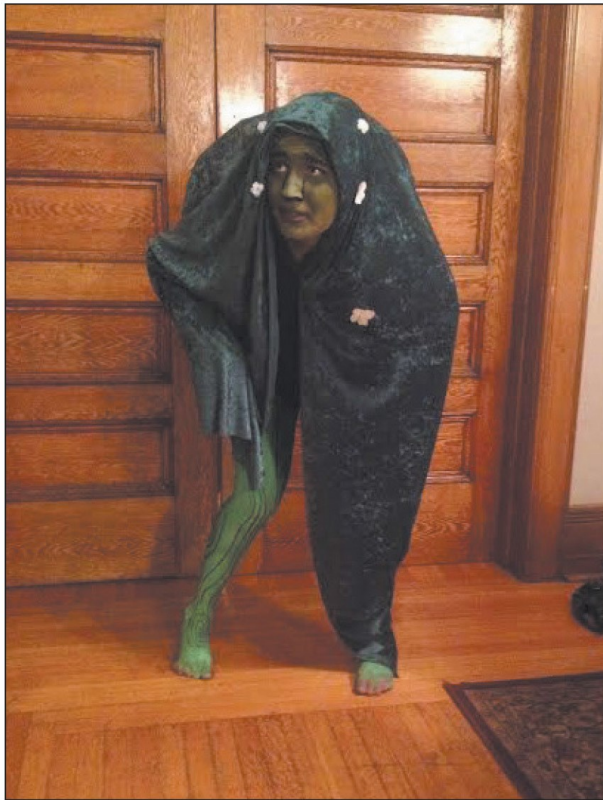
ELEVENTH PLACE

ADINA LEE WEINIG as Landfallian Soldier Alanna



TENTH PLACE

JESSICA L. & SON as Klara and Toddler Marko



NINTH PLACE
SHELBY NETSCHKE as Yuma



SEVENTH PLACE
GEN and NATHAN LEVERTON as The Will and lying Cat



EIGHTH PLACE
BRAD BROWN as Dengo



SIXTH PLACE
JAQUELINE MARTINEZ as Zipless



FIFTH PLACE

DANNY SIEBENHAAR & FRIEND as Marko & Hazel on Gardenia



SECOND PLACE

KATHRYN SLAFTER as The Brand (with puppy Sweet Boy)



FOURTH PLACE

JAZMINE DUDLEY as Gwendolyn



FIRST PLACE

MIKE DICKENS as Prince Robot IV



THIRD PLACE

"GJB" as Open Circuit Heckler from Phang (deep cut!)

Hello,

Hope you're having a great day. Attached are some photos of my recent Prince Robot IV costume. We (my fiancée, good friend Austin, and myself) had a great time making this costume shortly before HeroesCon.

The head was made from scratch and had a working LCD screen that cycled several video recreations of panels from the book. It was powered with a long lasting battery. I was able to see via a small hidden camera that fed a tiny LCD on the inside. We put as much attention to detail as possible. Our suit was custom sewn, as was the shirt, pants and ruff. Epaulettes were made and attached to hand rolled braids. We were really happy with how the costume turned out. I had a great time striking regal poses.

We greatly appreciate the work you do. Making costumes like this is so much easier with such incredible inspiration.

Thanks,

Mike/Caitlin/Austin



Holy crap. Mike, that costume is camera-ready for the (nonexistent) *Saga* film. If anyone out there was lucky enough to see this fully functional getup live at a convention, you know what a jaw-dropper it is. Congrats to you and your pals for the breathtaking work, and I'll let you decide how to divvy up your much-deserved loot: 500 bucks, an original one-of-a-kind Fiona Staples sketch of YOU as Prince Robot IV, and least of all, a brand-new one-page comic script that I'll write exclusively for you.

Seeing the creativity, diversity and unbelievable quality of everyone's attempts to bring our characters to life was a thrill for the whole *Saga* team, so massive thanks again to everyone who contributed.

Speaking of costumes, shouldn't the rest of you be getting ready for trick-or-treating right about now? Here's hoping you all have a swell Halloween and a joyous holiday season, and I promise we'll be back before you know it with the greatest adventure yet for our far-flung family.

Can't wait to meet a few of you soon,
Brian

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